THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTE-DAR); (a) and (b) The viability of some mini-steel plants in the country during the last *tavr* years has been somewhat poor due to their technological obsolescence. Mini-Steel Plants have also represented regarding shortage of power and high prices of inputs.

(e) In order to enable the units to become technologically efficient and more viable. Government have decided to allow expansion of mini steel plants which undertake modernisation. Government have also reduced the custom duty on imported scrap by 5 per cent *ad valorem* with effect from 4th December, 86.

Impact of Import of Seeds on Domestic production of Quality Seeds

320. SHRI PARVATHANENI UP-ENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRI-CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow import of large quan tities of seeds under OGL;

(b) if so. the reasons for allowing such imports;

(c) whether the imports would affect domestic production of quality seeds:
and

(d) whether the imported seeds are likely to suit out environmental condi tions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) No. Sir. However, the import of only seeds of vegetables/flowers and ornamental plants, tubes and bulbs, cutting saplings, budwoods, etc. of
flowers will be allowed on OGL by identified categories.

(b) the reason behind allowing such imports are to increase vegetable pro-duction and productivity, to ensure the increased availability of vegetables on reasonable prices to the consumers, to increase exports and *to* generate higher income to the farmers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Lock-out in industrial Units

321. SHRI PARVATHANENI UP-ENDRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state-.

(a) the number of industrial units which have declared lock-outs during the last three years since January. 1985; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to reopen these factories?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR : (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) According to latest available informa-1 tion, the number of units which decl-I ared lock-outs was 400 in 1985, 434 in 1986 and 451 in 1987.

(b) The Government have been maintaining a close and continuous watch on the industrial relations situation in the country. Industrial Relation Machinery both at the Centre and in the States are taking steps to reduce the incidence of lock-outs through prevenitve mediation and conciliation. Penalities for illegal lock-outs are proposed to be made more stringent in the amendments proposed to the Industrial Disputes Act 1947.

Telecast of Ballets on Social Themes

322. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPEN-DRA: Will the Minister of INFOR-MATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cul-|tural organisations have approachedGovernment for telecast of bellets'on social themes, including dowry

evil and promotion of National integration;

(b) if so, the number of such requests received by Government urging the last two years; and

(c) the number of such programmes telecast during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHIR H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) to (c) Doordarshan telecast programmes in various formats, including ballets, on social themes like evils of dowry, promotion of national integration etc This is a continuous process. Requests received from Cultural and other organisations or individuals from time to time for telecast of their programmes on the subject are considered by Doordarshan on merits. No figures are maintained about the number of such requests received and their programmes telecast by Doordarshan.

एल० पी० जी० वितरकों के पास काम कर रहे मजदूरों को सहायता

323. **श्री सुनील कुमार पट्टनायक :** क्या श्रम मंत्री यह बतने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि देश के सभी राज्यों में एल०पी०जी० वितरकों के पास पिछले दस पंद्रह वर्षों से दैनिक मजदूरी तथा ठेके पर कार्य करने वाले मजदूरों को सरकार से किसी भी प्रकार की सहायता नहीं मिलती है ?

(ख) यदि उपर्युक्त भाग (क) का उत्तर "हां" हो तो इसके क्या कारण हैं और क्या सरकार इन गरीब मजदूरों को किसी प्रकार की सहायता उपलब्ध कराने पर विचार कर रही है ; और

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है और यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ?

श्रम मंत्री (श्री बिन्देश्वरी दुबे) : क से (ग) सूचना जो एकत्र की जा रही है यथा समय सभा पटल पर रख दी जाएगी ।

Arrears of Provident Fund Dues

324. SHRI RAOOF VALLIULLAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing rate of arrears of Provident Fund dues to the employe es, if so, what steps Government have contemplated to realise the ar rears;

(b) what were the arrears under the exempted and unexempted sectors in 1986-87 and 1937-88; and

(c) whether Government propose to recover- Provident Fund dues deducting certain percentage of the net bills payable on Government purchases?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR <SHRI BINDESHWAR1 DUBEY): (a) Yes, Sir. The E.P.F. and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 has been amended recently and following additional provisions have been made for speedy recovery of arrears: —

(i) The penal provision prescribed in section 14 of the Act have been made more stringent.

(ii) The provisions relating to assessment of dues, recovery of dues as arrears of land revenue, levy of damages etc. have been made applicable to the exempted establishments.

(iii) A provision has been made For Setting up an Independent machinery of the E.P.F. Organisation for realisation of arrears of the E.P.F. dues.